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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2017
TAGS: [OSCE](#) [PREL](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN/OSCE: INTRODUCING PHILIP REMLER AS CANDIDATE
FOR HEAD OF OSCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In an October 22 meeting at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs with MFA Director General for Europe and North America Jose Maria "Pepe" Pons (who is the focal point for OSCE issues during Spain's chairmanship), EUR DAS David Kramer introduced Philip Remler as the U.S. candidate to head the OSCE Mission to Moldova when the incumbent steps down on November 16. Kramer laid out Remler's extensive professional experience in the former Soviet Union and said that he had exactly the right set of diplomatic skills for this important position. Remler discussed his experience in peace negotiations in the region, having participated in the peace processes for Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria. DAS Kramer expressed our hope that this position continue to be held by an American, and mentioned that the Moldovans themselves have voiced their support for a U.S. candidate. Remler said that he had spent much time in Moscow and knew most if not all of the Russian officials currently working the frozen conflicts. Remler said that if he were selected, he would work to engage with the Russians and convince them that the alternative to a frozen conflict is not, as they see it, a "hot war," but rather a "resolved conflict." DAS Kramer told Pons that it is important that the new head be in place in time to attend the November 29-30 OSCE Ministerial in Madrid. Kramer also noted that the deputy head of mission was also due to step down around the same time and wondered if there would be any way for that individual to extend until the end of the year.

¶2. (C) Pons responded by thanking Kramer and Remler for making the effort to come to Madrid to make the introduction in person, and noted that the job vacancy had just been announced on October 19. While not sure of the timeframe for nominating and vetting candidates, he believed it would take 2-3 weeks. He said that Spain, in its position of OSCE CiO, must remain neutral during this process, but that he appreciated the strength of Remler's resume. He mentioned that Foreign Minister Moratinos would also remain noncommittal in his public statements during the selection process. Pons said that for Spain's OSCE chairmanship, it was vital that the new head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova be seen as representing all parties to the conflict and working in the best interests of the OSCE. Pons agreed on the need to have the new Moldova Mission head in place in time for the Ministerial but then added that, as the Spanish term in office is coming to an end, the new official would be dealing mostly with the incoming Finnish CiO. He also added that Spain would see what it could do to extend the deputy head of mission's term in office until the end of this year. Pons ended by saying that his deputy would be presenting at the October 23 meeting in Odessa a letter calling for another meeting of the 5 plus 2 on November 12.

//COMMENT//

¶3. (C) In a pull aside after the meeting, Pons told DAS Kramer that the Spanish government looked forward to working with Remler. Pons' statements to Kramer on the selection process mirror what he told the DCM on October 18, namely that Spain would need to go out of its way to stick to form and not appear to favor one candidate over another. However, as Pons also said that Remler's candidacy was a strong one, we are optimistic about the result. On October 23, Ambassador Aguirre sent to Foreign Minister Moratinos a hard copy of the letter from U/S Burns and the DCM faxed a copy to Pons.

¶4. (U) DAS Kramer cleared this cable.
AGUIRRE